

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 3, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and Related  
Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Senate Dirksen Building, 131  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and Related  
Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Senate Dirksen Building, 156  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

As the subcommittee begins its consideration of a Fiscal Year 2015 appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, I respectfully request support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

**Health and Human Services**

*The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*

**1. Title:** Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program

**Program Description:** This program tests the feasibility and advisability of cost based reimbursement for small rural hospitals that are too large to be Critical Access Hospitals.

**Bill Language Requested:** Section 410A of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-173; 42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3123 and 10313 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, (Public Law 111-148), is amended— (1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking “5-year extension period” and inserting “10-year extension period”; and (2) in subsection (g)— (A) in the subsection heading, by striking “FIVE-YEAR” and inserting “TEN-YEAR”; (B) in paragraph (1), by striking “additional 5-year” and inserting “additional 10- year”; and (C) by striking “5-year extension period” each place it appears and inserting “10-year extension period”.

**Rationale:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is conducting a Rural Community Hospital (RCH) Demonstration Program, which was initiated under its original mandate, section 410A of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, and

extended for an additional 5-year period under section 10313 of the Affordable Care Act. Congress included these provisions in these laws in response to the financial concerns of small rural hospitals. The program allows 30 hospitals in the 20 most rural states that do not qualify for critical access hospital status to be reimbursed at “reasonable costs” for Medicare patients. These hospitals must have fewer than 50 beds but more than 25 beds. The program enhances the participating hospitals ability to provide additional key services so Medicare patients can remain close to home with their support network. This can improve outcomes, patient satisfaction and reduce long term costs due to overall better outcomes.

*Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)*

**2. Title:** Health Centers

**Program Description:** Health centers provide comprehensive, culturally competent, quality primary health care services to medically underserved communities and vulnerable populations. Health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that serve populations with limited access to health.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President’s Budget Request:** \$1,000,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support Fiscal year 2014 enacted \$1,495,000,000

**Report Language Requested:** Within the total, the committee directs HRSA to allocate and fully utilize the discretionary and mandatory funding available in the Fiscal Year 2015 Health Center Fund to allow for health center growth and meet identified primary care needs.

**Rationale:** Ensuring a total funding level of \$5.1 billion is used in Fiscal Year 2015 will establish the capacity to care for up to 11 million new patients.

**3. Title:** Area Health Education Centers

**Program Description:** To address health care workforce shortages, particularly those in primary care. This program supports the recruitment and retention of local physicians, students, faculty and other primary care providers in rural and medically underserved areas by providing local, community-based, interdisciplinary primary care training.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President’s Budget Request:** \$0

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support Fiscal Year 2014 enacted \$30,326,000

**Rationale:** Serves a vital role in building the health care workforce in rural and underserved areas.

**4. Title:** National Health Service Corps

**Program Description:** The Corps works to build healthy communities by supporting qualified health care providers dedicated to working in rural and other areas of the country where access to care is limited and where shortages of health care professionals persist.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President’s Budget Request:** \$100,000,000



**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**5. Title:** Nursing Workforce Development Programs

**Program Description:** Promotes the supply, skills and distribution of qualified nursing personnel needed to improve the health of the public.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$206,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**6. Title:** Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant

**Program Description:** To improve the health of all mothers, children, and their families by reducing health disparities, improving access to health care, and improving the quality of health care.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 634,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support FY 2012 enacted \$ 639,000,000

**7. Title:** Title X Family Planning

**Program Description:** Title X of Public Health Service Act is the only federal program dedicated to providing family planning services for low-income patients. Every year, Title X provides basic primary and preventive health care services such as Pap smears, breast exams and HIV testing, to nearly five million low-income women and men at over 4,100 health centers each year.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 286,479, 000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$ 41,000,000

**Rationale:** Recent cuts in funding to the Title X program have forced nearly 200 health centers to close, reducing patient served, adequate funding will restore and expand access to services.

**8. Title:** Rural Health Policy Development

**Program Description:** Rural Health Policy Development activities support a range of policy analysis, research and information dissemination. The program advises the Secretary on how policies affect rural communities and conducts research to inform its policy analysis activities.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$9,351,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$1 million

**Bill Language Requested:** Section 434(e) of Public Law No. 108-173 is amended by replacing the word "three" with the number "6" and replacing the number "3" with the number "6".

**Report Language Requested:** The Committee understands that many primary care clinics in isolated, remote locations are providing extended stay services and are not staffed or receiving appropriate compensation to provide this service. The Committee encourages HRSA to continue its support of "Frontier Extended Stay Clinic" providers

who provide expanded services in remote and isolated primary care clinics to meet the needs of seriously ill or injured patients who cannot be transferred quickly to acute care referral centers, and to meet the needs of patients who require monitoring and observation for a limited time. \$1,000,000 for each of Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 shall support "Frontier Extended Stay Clinics" and shall remain available until expended.

**Rationale:** In response to the growing need for emergency care in rural America, specifically in frontier areas, Congress created the Frontier Extended Stay Clinic (FESC) Demonstration under HRSA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid. FESC allows remote clinics to treat patients for more extended periods, including overnight stays, and prevents the need for many costly medical evacuation operations to distant hospitals. Extending the FESC Demonstration project will help improve access to care for rural Americans. FESC is a Medicare payment classification pertaining to (1) emergency treatment of patients staying in the clinic for over four hours when transporting them to a hospital is not possible, and (2) short-term (up to 48 hours) monitoring and observation of patients in cases where an EMS transfer or a hospital emergency room visit or stay is unnecessary. A FESC may only be located in a community that is at least 75 miles from the nearest acute care or critical access hospital, or that is inaccessible by public road.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

**9. Title:** National Institutes of Health

**Program Description:** Advances fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to extend healthy lives and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$30,362,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**Report Language Requested:** Not less than \$5 million shall be used specifically for research on the determinants of self-directed and other violence in mental illness, including studies designed to reduce the risk of self-harm, suicide, and interpersonal violence, especially in rural communities with a shortage of mental health services.

**Rationale:** Additional research is required to better understand self-directed and other violence associated with mental illness in order to prevent and treat suicides, self-harming violent behavior and interpersonal violence.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration

**10. Title:** Mental Health First Aid

**Program Description:** This program instructs training audiences on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental disorders, teaches crisis de-escalation techniques, and facilitates referrals to mental health services for individuals in psychiatric crisis.



**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 15,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$ 5,000,000

**Rationale:** Recent incidents nation-wide such as the Navy Yard shooting demonstrate the need for additional funding for this program.

**11. Title:** Tribal Behavioral Health Grant program within the Center for Mental Health Services

**Program Description:** To address the high incidence of substance abuse and suicide in American Indian/Alaska Natives.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 5,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** + \$ 5,000,000

**Report Language Requested:** In order to address the high incidence of substance abuse and suicide in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations, the bill provides an additional \$5,000,000 to be used for competitively awarded grants targeting tribal entities with the highest rates of suicide per capita over the past 10 years. Funds shall be used for effective and promising strategies that address the problems of substance abuse and suicide and promote mental health among AI/AN young people.

**Rationale:** Additional funding is required for behavioral and mental health of American Indian and Alaska Native populations to address the high suicide and substance abuse issues within the populations.

**12. Title:** Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Center for Excellence

**Program Description:** Focuses on preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders among women of childbearing age and improving the quality of life for individuals and families impacted by these disorders.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 1,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$ 7,000,000

**Rationale:** Additional funds would restore the work done by the Center including training and technical assistance in treatment and prevention approaches as well as support the recently established Native Communities Initiative to address FASD in American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian populations.

**13. Title:** Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (CMHC)

**Program Description:** Provides block grants to states for Community Mental Health services.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 483,744,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$ 48,200,000

**Rationale:** CMHC's funding has not increased yet there is an increase in demand for services, especially for young children with serious mental illness.

**14. Title:** Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant

**Program Description:** Block grants to states for treatment and prevention programs for substance abuse.

**Fiscal Year 2015 Presidents Budget Request:** \$ 1,819,000

**Additional Request:** + \$1,000,000

**Rationale:** Funding for this program is declining slightly year-to-year yet the need for treatment and prevention of substance abuse has not.

*Administration for Children and Families*

**15. Title:** Head Start

**Program Description:** Promotes school preparation by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through education, health, nutrition and social services for low income children

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 8.68B

**Additional Amount Requested:** Restore to pre-sequestration level of \$9.6B

**Rationale:** Children, especially those in rural areas, have benefited from Head Start. Sequestration caused reduction in children attending.

*Administration for Community Living*

**16. Title:** Older Americans Act Program

**Description:** Ensures older adults remain at home for as long as possible, provides services, such as Meals on Wheels and Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Provides grants to states.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 1.871 billion

**Additional Amount Requested:** + \$225,000,000

**Rationale:** Fiscal Year 2014 funding was \$1.871 billion, which is 3.6% more than Fiscal Year 2013 (\$1.81 billion), but still 2.2% less than Fiscal Year 2012 (\$1.91). With the exception of 2009 and 2010, funding has essentially remained flat for a decade despite increased need for this program due to an increasing population.

*Office of Community Services (ACF)*

**17. Title:** Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)

**Program Description:** Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides grants to states, territories and tribes for poverty reduction, including services to address employment, education, housing assistance, nutrition, energy, emergency services, health, and substance abuse. Each state submits an annual application (State Plan) and certifies that the state agrees to provide: (1) a range of services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in communities where



poverty is an acute problem; and (2) activities designed to assist low-income participants, including the elderly, in becoming self-sufficient.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 350,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** +\$ 324,000,000

**Rationale:** The request for Fiscal Year 2015 reflects a decrease of almost half than the Fiscal Year 2014 enacted level of \$ 674,000,000 to "target CSBG resources to high-performing innovative agencies." Yet, The CSBG Network was able to help 103,246 unemployed individuals obtain a job; More than 22,200 individuals were able to complete Adult Basic Education or GED coursework and receive certificates or diplomas through CSBG Network initiatives; CSBG Network efforts assisted 162,000 low-income people in obtaining safe and affordable housing; The CSBG Network assisted 2,163,400 people obtain food assistance; and During a time where child poverty increased, the CSBG Network was able to provide services to 6 million children in FY 2012 (e.g. before or after school program placement opportunities for low income children). This program is innovative and effectively addressing one of our nation's most pressing problems.

## Education

### **18. Title:** Alaska Native Student Education

**Program Description:** Provides grants to meet the unique education needs of Alaska Natives and to support supplemental education programs to benefit Alaska Natives.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$31,453,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**Report Language Requested:** The Committee is pleased the Department of Education followed the direction of the Committee to fulfill the intent of the current statute by adhering to the priorities authorized in the statute. The Committee directs the Department to continue its efforts to ensure maximum participation of Alaska Native organizations in programs funded under the Alaska Native Education Equity Act, implement statutory requirements that State and Local Educational Agencies apply in consortia with Alaska Native organizations, ensure that all grantees have meaningful plans for consultation with Alaska Native leaders, and strictly adhere to the programmatic priorities contained in the statute. The Committee looks forward to the report to Congress on how the Department will work to improve consultation with and promote maximum participation of Alaska Native organizations.

**Rationale:** These funds address the severe educational handicaps of Alaska Native schoolchildren. Funds are used for the development of supplemental educational programs to benefit Alaska Natives. Supporting Alaska Native educational equity also honors the federal government's responsibility to Native students who live in a state that receives no funding from the Bureau of Indian Education.

**19. Title:** Investing in Innovation

**Program Description:** Supports school districts, groups of schools, educational service agencies, and community organizations efforts to improve student achievement, increase high school graduation rates and improve college enrollment and completion.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$165,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**Report Language Requested:** The Committee recognizes the program is supporting innovation in improving student achievement and is concerned rural applicants are not seeing the same benefits as urban counterparts. The Committee directs the Department to include a 25 percent set-aside for rural applicants.

**20. Title:** Impact Aid

**Program Description:** The Impact Aid program provides financial support to school districts affected by Federal activities.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$1,221,790,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**21. Title:** Rural Education

**Program Description:** The Rural Education Achievement Program authorizes two programs to assist rural school districts in carrying out activities to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$169,840,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget Request

**22. Title:** Federal TRIO Programs

**Program Description:** The TRIO programs provide college preparation and student support programs for middle school, high school, and college students and adults.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$838,252,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**23. Title:** Fund for the Improvement of Education

**Program Description:** Supports nationally significant activities to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education at the State and local levels.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$24,276,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support Fiscal Year 2014 enacted \$42,376,000

**Report Language Requested:** The committee supports funding the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Competitive Grant Program to support national literacy programs.

**Rationale:** The President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2015 is a substantial reduction from the Fiscal Year 2014 enacted amount jeopardizing the grant program to support literacy.



**24. Title:** Career and Technical Education

**Program Description:** The program supports efforts to improve career and technical education, adult education and literacy systems, and competitive grants and contracts for evaluation, performance measurement and improvement, technical assistance, research and development, innovative programs, and other national activities.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$1,125,019,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**25. Title:** Special Education: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Grants to States

**Program Description:** Provides formula grants that help states pay the additional costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities aged 3 through 21 years. Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, states are required to provide a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$11,572,848,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**26. Title:** College- and career-ready students (Title 1)

**Program Description:** Provides funds to states to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$14,384,802,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**27. Title:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

**Program Description:** This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$1,149,370,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

**28. Title:** Preschool for All

**Program Description:** New voluntary preschool federal-state partnership providing low income-moderate income 4 year olds with high-quality, publicly-funded preschool.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$1.3B in mandatory funds (as part of a 10-year, \$75 B commitment).

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

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**29. Title:** Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)

**Program Description:** Supports high quality programs to improve literacy skills for children and students from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in high need schools.

**Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget Request:** \$ 25,000,000

**Additional Amount Requested:** Support President's Budget

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Lindsay Kavanaugh or Mercedes Birdsall, at (202) 224-3004 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator